



The Florida House of Representatives

Chris Sprowls
Speaker

NEWS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

media@myfloridahouse.gov

(850) 717-5780

Speaker Sprowls Highlights New Proposed Committee Bill to Address the Fatherhood Crisis

The legislation, sponsored by Chair Thad Altman, was approved by the House Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee today

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, the House Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee approved a [proposed committee bill](#) that addresses the crisis of the lack of involved fathers and resulting at-risk youth through several initiatives. The bill is sponsored by Subcommittee Chair Thad Altman, R-Indian River.

Children who have relationships with their fathers have critical positive outcomes in educational, socioeconomic and development and future success. Yet, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), one in four children live without a father figure in their home. This legislation seeks to encourage responsible fatherhood, alleviate the crisis of at-risk boys, and support foster children – especially those who age out of care.

“We cannot legislate fatherhood, responsibility or character. We can, however, provide support and resources to fathers and male role models in our communities to help them step up and meet the needs of children,” said Speaker Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, who first brought attention to the fatherhood crisis during his [2019 designation speech](#). “The provisions in this proposed committee bill couldn’t be more pressing, as the detrimental effects of absent fathers can be seen in almost every area of a child’s life. Today, we take the first step to end the cycle.”

The bill establishes programs to address the needs of fathers and awards grants to organizations that help struggling single fathers to become self-sufficient and meet their child support

obligations. Additionally, this bill designates June as Responsible Fatherhood Month in the state of Florida.

Also, the legislation helps at-risk boys through several provisions, including by offering grants to nonprofits involved in mentoring and investing in neighborhood-specific children's initiatives.

According to [the National Fatherhood Initiative](#), when children are raised in father-absent homes, they have a four-times greater risk of living in poverty and are twice as likely to drop out of high school. Children who have an involved father are twice as likely to go to college and 80% less likely to spend time in jail.

[\[View the House's Fatherhood Crisis video for more data\]](#)

"I am proud that the Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee approved this legislation today, and it is an honor to sponsor our efforts to address this crisis affecting today's youth," said Chair Altman. "Thank you to Speaker Sprowls for his leadership on this important topic. We must all come together as leaders in our communities if we truly hope to support our children and encourage intentional fatherhood."

Representative Colleen Burton, R-Lakeland, Chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee, added, "We will do everything we can at the Florida House to support family stability, and ultimately our children. Through educational opportunities and mentorship, we can break the cycle of poverty, crime and fatherlessness for generations to come."

The legislation also outlines several new measures to enhance the Postsecondary Education Supports and Services (PESS) program for former foster youth who pursue education and training beyond high school. The bill:

- Increases the monthly program stipend by \$464 per month—the first increase since 2013.
- Requires community-based care child welfare lead agencies to conduct individual college readiness assessments.
- Eliminates bureaucratic obstacles that make it harder for these former foster youth to successfully complete their education.

Read the full text of PCB CFS 22-01 at www.myfloridahouse.gov.

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